

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
May 1, 2007

On Tuesday, May 1, 2007, the Edgefield County Council held its regular monthly meeting. The meeting was held at 6:00 P. M. in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

Members present

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present

John W. Pettigrew, Jr., County Administrator
John F. Byrd, Jr., County Attorney
Lynn W. Strom, Finance/Budget Manager
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council
and others as per list attached

Chairman Kneece called the meeting to order and the invocation was given by Rev. Jasper Lloyd. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes

The motion to approve the following minutes, as presented, was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens.

Regular Meeting of Council	April 3, 2007
Called Council Meeting	April 17, 2007

The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

The chairman brought to the attention of council the letter of appreciation from the ETV Endowment of S. C. County Council funded \$1,000 to the ETV Road Show that will be filmed in Edgefield County on May 18th.

Public Hearings

Two public hearings were held to receive written and/or oral comments on two ordinances:

Pursuant to Section 6-1-80 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, County Council held a public hearing on Ordinance No. 06-07-590, "An Ordinance Providing for the Edgefield County General Operating Budget for FY 2007-08."

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Ordinance No. 06-07-591, “An Ordinance Authorizing the Chairman of the Council to Execute a Quit Claim Deed Transferring Legal Title to Twenty (20) Acres, More or Less, Being a Part of the Edgefield County Industrial Park, to Project Normandy or It’s Designee.”

Mr. Bob Ramsey (Mt. Vintage) had comments concerning the budget ordinance (06-07-590). There were questions from Mr. Ramsey as well as other Mt. Vintage residents:

1. **The \$200,000 interest paid**
2. **Where the funds were invested**
3. **Salaries, benefits, Christmas gifts for county employees**
4. **Sheriff’s budget request (four new deputies)**
5. **Millage rate**

There were questions for the council members concerning Ordinance No. 06-07-591.

Mr. Ramsey stated this is a project that council is considering and the public knows nothing about. He understood the anonymous part of the project, but also was aware that a decision on the project has been put on hold for a couple of months. Then why would council give a title (20 acres) to an entity no one knows about.

Mr. Ramsey was assured that the third reading of this ordinance will not be held until a decision is reached by Project Normandy.

Ordinances

The second reading of Ordinance No. 06-07-590, “An Ordinance Providing for the Edgefield County General Operating Budget for FY 2007-08”, was approved by a motion made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Golden Harvest Food Bank

Mr. Michael J. Firmin, Executive Director of the Golden Harvest Food Bank addressed council concerning the Food Bank’s involvement in Edgefield County. Mr. Firmin asked the council to consider the Food Bank’s request of \$2,500 in the 2007-08 Budget which will be used for their Manna Truck (mobile unit). This funding would help alleviate the need for food for over 13% of the people of Edgefield County that live in poverty. It targets very specific areas and will generate over 50 thousand pounds of extra food coming into the county. In the last 12 months almost 300,000 pounds of food was distributed in Edgefield County.

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ETV Activities

On May 18th, ETV (Road Show) will be on the square in Edgefield. Mrs. Donna Livingston, Director of the Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce, showed a DVD presentation of areas that will be included in the road show. She highlighted the schedule of events.

Emergency Management Agency

The EMA Director, Mike Casey, introduced himself to the ones in the audience that did not know him and he also thanked council for the funding allowing him to hire a part-time secretary, Sandi Backensto. She also volunteers many hours a week.

There is a new Emergency Operations Plan Manual that Sandi has just completed (twice the size of the old one) based on new mandates by the federal government and the state government to each of the forty six (46) counties in South Carolina. One of the new requirements by the federal government that is directed to state government and local government is the NIMS (National Incident Management System) which by states and counties adopting NIMS gives a unified instant command system. In September 2005 Edgefield County adopted the unified instant command system concept.

County government officials from EMA to county administrator (people in some position that must be involved in an emergency) will have to take a certain amount of NIMS courses. If the courses are not taken the county will not receive any grant money. The sheriff's department, city police, fire department are taking courses – we will have to be compliant to be eligible for any type of federal grant money. Most of the state money comes from the federal government in the way of grants. (Mike and Sandi will be attending a class that will be hosted by Edgefield County for several counties.) This is another responsibility that falls back on emergency management. Edgefield County is the parent agency. They have endorsed this operations plan for many years. The new plan has been approved which is used as a general operations plan on how to handle any emergency that should come up. The plan gives general guidelines to go by.

EMA is becoming more and more the lead agency in Edgefield County and all of the counties in civil disasters, bomb threats, weather related disasters, evacuations. Edgefield County has an agreement with Beaufort County that should a hurricane cause a mandatory evacuation of the county, we are their host county. They will bring all of their roads and bridges people, their road equipment to this county until the storm passes through. Then they go back to the Beaufort County line and start cutting their way back into the county.

More pressure and responsibility has been placed on Mike and Sandi to be responsible for coordination which in turn he has to ask for more additional co-operation from the fire departments, EMS, and law enforcement. Mike's job is not to instruct the sheriff or

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deputy, the fireman, etc. of how to handle a disaster but to get the required resources that are needed for that particular situation. A HazMat incident is Mike's responsibility and he would have to take leave to take care of it. He is trained in that.

For every 5,000 population EMA has to have a POD (point of distribution). Should a tornado hit a part of the county supplies can be brought in to those points for distribution from the two receiving points that have been set up. The two receiving points established for supply trucks to come in are located in the northern and southern parts of the county.

Mr. Casey, as in previous updates, informed the audience that the council chamber building is equipped to serve as the county's emergency operation center. The equipment in the building was received through a Homeland Security 100% grant.

Mike asked for council's assistance and endorsement to the fact that emergency management is going to have to take a greater hands-on role in the county because of what is being mandated from federal and state down to the counties. There is no problem with Mike with the extra responsibility but he stated he does not want to "ruffle any feathers." The county (council) has taken on the role as the lead agency, you are endorsing this. This is the way you prepare to take care of the county citizens, as well as the three towns. The three towns have adopted this plan as their guide. Mike serves at the pleasure of the towns also to help them in an emergency.

Councilman Kitchens thanked Mike for the work he does and has done. Mr. Kitchens asked Mike if he could give an approximate amount in grants that he has secured for the county in the last two years. "For the county and the cities a little in the excess of a half million dollars – 100% money". "We constantly go on the websites to see what is available. There is mitigation grant money which mitigation is prevention funds – 75% federal and 25% local match."

One "for instance" (mitigation funds) could be used for a drainage problem in the county where roads would wash out continually from heavy rains. You could ask for larger drainage pipe, other ways to divert the water (that is prevention). Mike stated that his suggestion has been if the local 25% match isn't available would be to try to partner with the Water Authority. If there is a project that would benefit the Authority and that would also bring water to an area that is served by wells and septic tanks then you partner with them and maybe the Water Authority might be able to get some grant money that would feed that 25%. The lady that is in charge of this is on the review board for the federal grants, sent back last year three million dollars in unused grants from South Carolina. Fifteen Million Dollars had been allocated to state. A grant writer can actually be paid from the grant funds – not the typing of it, but writing the grant, all the leg work."

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Mitigation money has been used here in Edgefield County. By law the 911 center has to have an alternate site in case of damages. Our alternate site is the fire department here in Edgefield. The funds would not buy a generator but it would pay to wire the building for a generator. It paid to put storm film (plastic) over the windows so if something hits the window it would not break, just shatter and water could not come in; paid to wire two-way radios for the dispatchers; paid for bars, storm doors, storm shutters. The same was done at the EMS building.

At this point Councilman Kitchens asked if the alarm systems had been installed to the sheriff's office from the Clerk of Court, and Treasurer. Mr. Pettigrew stated that the project has begun but the alarms have not been installed. They have been ordered and also waiting for some parts to come in.

Bettis Park Rules

The following rules for Bettis Park were adopted by council with the motion made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Dorn:

- No Alcoholic beverages, no profanity, and no loud music on premises.
- No pets allowed at the park.
- Only use designated parking spots. Do not park on the grass areas.
- Lights are only to be used for scheduled games or organized practices. Lights are not to be used for individual practices.
- No hitting balls into the fences at the park.
- Please put all trash in trash containers.
- If anyone would like to use the park or any particular field for an event, please contact Debra Barley at (803) 292-0550.

****This park is under the Jurisdiction of the Edgefield County Sheriff's Department.**

WALKING TRACK ONLY

No motorized vehicles of any type or bicycles are allowed on the walking track.

****Enforced by Edgefield County Sheriff's Department**

Motion carried unanimously.

Magistrate's Court

Councilman Dorn spoke on a matter he has an interest in concerning magistrate court and the statewide court case management system that council voted on at the April 30th council meeting.

No Old Business.

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Administrator's Report

The baseball field at Northside Park has been completed; installed the backstop, fencing, bases – ready to play. We are currently getting prices on a basketball court and hopefully there will be enough money in the budget to do that this fiscal year.

The economic development projects are moving along. There are several things that we are working with. Several of our existing industries are also looking at substantial expansions but they are not ready to make any announcements at this time. Things are very encouraging in the area of economic development with the additional investment and jobs for the county – should know something within the next three to four months on those projects.

The computer system in the council office is giving us a lot of problems. The program is approximately ten years old. The finance manager is compiling proposals from several vendors and we hope to have some solutions to the problems to recommend to council.

Mr. Ramsey, at council's last meeting, asked for some explanation of the new property tax reduction law that was referred to tonight. (At this time a power point presentation by the administrator was given comparing two tax bills for this past year.) This illustration shows what the school operations reduction will do to these individual tax bills. The percentage reduction is different on each tax bill. This is a state law that was passed by the legislature last year. The legislature is still in session this year so something could be changed.

The property tax reduction for school operations only applies to owner/occupied residences. This property that is taxed at 4%. That is the way the law is written. It does not apply to a second home; a home at the beach; a commercial building; the lot next to your house as an investment. This reduction does not apply to that.

No guests.

Comments from Public

The question from the audience concerning the Northside Recreation Park was asked by a citizen in the audience. "On Northside Park, I understand that the picnic shelter could not be pursued. Are other proposals being pursued for that area?" The administrator understood the question was concerning the restroom facilities. "Ms. Elyse Benson (RC&D Coordinator, US Dept. of Agriculture) is helping us acquire some grant money to install a picnic shelter/restroom facilities. We had identified a Land and Water Conversation grant to get the money but the county does now own the land so we are not eligible for that particular grant program. That is what we are running into with some of the grant programs. We have a long term lease on the property. We

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Councilman Kitchens directed a question to Chairman Kneece concerning the Senior Citizens Building. He read that the contract had been awarded for the new Senior Citizens Building – twelve months to complete construction. The county does own the complex that houses the Senior Citizens and Mr. Kitchens feels some preparations should begin for the use of the space. It is not a piece of property that is very advantageous for anything we would want to do. Twelve months is not a very long time in county government.

Claims approved as follows:

3/26/07 thru 4/8/07

4/9/07 thru 4/22/07

General Operating.....\$494,539.85

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There being no further business, Councilman Dorn made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Hudson. Motion carried. A budget work session is scheduled for Tuesday, May 15th and the regular county council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 5, 2007.

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

B. Everette Kitchens, Council

ATTEST

Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council